

**USDA, NRCS  
PLANT  
MATERIALS  
PROGRAM**

**POINTS  
OF  
INTEREST**

◆ **Bumpers**

**Eastern gama-  
grass**

**Grazing Study**

◆ **PMC offers**

**Training**

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# **BOONEVILLE PLANT PRESS**

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## **'BUMPERS' EASTERN GAMAGRASS GRAZING TRIAL**



The Booneville Plant Materials Center (PMC) has partnered with Dr. Mike Looper, research scientist, with the Dale Bumpers Small Farms Research Center in Booneville, to conduct grazing trials of recently released 'Bumpers' eastern gamagrass. The PMC established four two-and-a-half acre plots for Dr. Looper in 2006. The PMC is responsible for management of the forage and Dr. Looper manages the animals. Grazing began in the spring of 2008 when the forage had reached a height of 18 inches. The stocking rate is approximately 2.5 head of yearling heifers per acre, with four replications. Animals were weighed prior to placing them on the plots and they are weighed on 45 day intervals. The average daily gain for the first period was 1.25 pounds. The second grazing period produced one and a third pounds per head per day. The rainfall for Booneville is well above average for 2008 and the forage is performing very well under the 2.5 head stocking rate. The only fertility applied, was an annual rate of 250 lbs. of complete (13-13-13) fertilizer applied at green-up (mid-April).

This study is scheduled for three years, at which time Dr. Looper will look at gains on 'Bumpers' using implanted vs. non-implanted animals, and varying stocking rates and grazing periods. The PMC will adjust fertility to enable the forage to accommodate a variety of stocking rates and extended grazing periods. The PMC will produce Technical Notes to reflect the results of this research to enable ranchers to obtain the highest economical animal gains utilizing the new eastern gamagrass cultivar.

# *Plant Materials Center Staff Conducts Training for NRCS Field Office Staff*



**On a hot summer day in August, employees with the Natural Resources Conservation Service find a cool shade to pose for a photo!**

On August 5 & 6, 22 NRCS employees from across the northwest and southern areas of Arkansas participated in a two-day training session held at the Booneville Plant Materials Center (PMC).

With temperatures well above the century mark, day one was held in the PMC conference room. Randy King, manager of the PMC, welcomed participants and gave an overview of current studies conducted by the PMC. King also

taught session on plant identification, which consisted of pasture weeds and native grass species.

Lance Tharel, assistant PMC manager, trained participants in calculating Pure Live Seed (PLS) from information on seed tags. Tharel also provided training on animal waste (broiler litter) nutrient management.

The second day of training included training by Dale Goff, biological sciences technician, in correct seedbed preparation for planting native grasses.

Ed Pratt, biological sciences technician, trained participants in correct pesticide sprayer calibration and pesticide handling safety/farm equipment safety.

Training concluded with a demonstration of a poultry litter injection system invented by Dr. Dan Pote, and Steve Haller, of the Dale Bumpers Small Farms Research Center. The system injects dry broiler litter to a depth of up to 2 inches in the soil. The invention should eliminate nutrient runoff from land applied broiler litter.

## Mission Statement of NRCS



*The mission of the Natural Resources Conservation (NRCS) Plant Materials Program (PM) is to develop, test, and transfer effective state-of-the-art plant science technology to meet customer and resource needs. NRCS PM activities are consistent with the objectives of the current United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and NRCS Strategic Plans (Exhibit 539-1), namely to provide timely and effective vegetative solutions for identified resource needs.*

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